

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend paragraph number [0006] as follows:

[0006] The dual damascene technique relies upon electroplating metal into preformed vias and trenches, followed by planarizing to remove excess metal from the wafer surface. While either the trench or the via may be etched first in the formation of dual damascene structures, most semiconductor ~~manufactures~~ manufacturers have chosen to adopt the via-first approach. The major drawback of the trench-first approach is that after the trench has been etched, the photoresist that is applied for the via etch will completely fill the trench creating local regions of extra thick resist in the areas where the vias are to be patterned. Forming the very fine via structures in such thick resist is extremely difficult and, as a result, the trench-first approach to dual damascene formation has been largely abandoned.